



Method of Playing a BINGO GAME With Progressive Jackpot

1 This invention relates to a bingo game, and more particularly
2 to a bingo game that utilizes a seven-by-seven matrix card, adds
3 progressive jackpot pools and increases the attractiveness of the
4 game to the players.

5
6 Background of the Invention

7 Conventional bingo is a well known game. Players are provided
8 with bingo cards that have a matrix of five rows and five columns.
9 The columns are lettered B I N G O from left to right across the
10 top of the matrix and each bingo card has five numbers in each row
11 except the center I column which has a "free space" at the
12 intersection of the third row and the third column.

13 Bingo balls individually numbered 1-75 are mixed together and
14 balls are selected one at a time. As each ball is selected, the
15 number is announced to the players, who cover any corresponding
16 number on their bingo card. When a player achieves a predetermined
17 arrangement of covered spots on his bingo card, that player yells
18 out "Bingo!" and he wins the game.

19 In the conventional manner of play of bingo, in order to win
20 the game, a player must cover five spaces in a vertical column, a
21 horizontal row or along one of the two diagonals of the bingo card.
22 The free space in the center of the bingo card allows a player to
23 win with as few as four numbers being drawn. Other winning
24 combinations include the four corners of the bingo card and the
25 eight numbers immediately adjacent and surrounding the free space.

2

1 Winning combinations can also include the covering of spots on the
2 bingo card so that letter symbols are formed such as an X, U, L, H
3 or T.

4 The operator of the bingo game will designate at the beginning
5 of the game which particular combination or combinations of covered
6 spots will be winning combinations for that particular game. It is
7 also popular to play "coverall" or "blackout" games in which all of
8 the spots on the bingo card must be covered (the twenty-four spots
9 having numbers and the center free space) in order for the player
10 to win.

11 Bingo can be played as an amusement game, but it is quite
12 popular as a form of gambling. Players purchase bingo cards for
13 use during the bingo session and winning players receive payouts
14 from the operator or gaming establishment. Typically, a bingo
15 session includes a number of individual bingo games concluding with
16 a coverall game in which a large prize is awarded. Some operators
17 also offer a jackpot prize if the coverall is achieved within a
18 fixed number of called numbers, e.g. 50.

19 It is also known to add an extra colored bingo ball to the
20 seventy-five numbered balls. The colored ball acts as a wild card
21 or wild number and, if this colored ball is drawn, a player may
22 cover any number he chooses on the bingo card.

23 Conventional bingo has remained relatively unchanged for many
24 years. As legalized gaming expands into more and more jurisdic-
25 tions and as Indian gaming becomes more widespread, there is a need

1 to increase the attractiveness of bingo in order to interest more
2 players to participate in the game.

3 In relative terms, bingo as it is currently conducted in
4 gaming casinos is a low payout game. During each bingo game,
5 numbers are drawn until a player wins, so the gaming establishment
6 is limited in the amount of money it can award as prizes. During
7 a regular bingo game in which the winning bingo combination is
8 simply five covered spots in a row vertically, diagonally or
9 horizontally, a winning player can expect to receive a \$500.00
10 payout. The jackpot coverall game at the end of a session may pay
11 out \$1,000.00 to the winning player. If a typical bingo session
12 has ten regular games and a single jackpot coverall game, the
13 gaming establishment has guaranteed to pay out \$6,000.00 to the
14 players.

15 The revenue to the gaming establishment is based on the number
16 of bingo cards that are bought by the players. Since the prize
17 fund is guaranteed at a fixed amount, the more bingo cards a gaming
18 establishment can sell, the better the profit will be.

19 Bingo operators have attempted to increase interest in bingo
20 by paying larger jackpot payouts for coveralls achieved in a
21 predetermined number of selected numbers. It takes at least
22 twenty-four drawn numbers to achieve a coverall and typically most
23 bingo operators select a number between fifty and fifty-five as the
24 number of balls in which the coverall is achieved in order for the
25 player to win the large jackpot, say \$5,000.00. If a coverall is
26 not achieved within this preset number requirement, then the payout

1 reverts to the smaller jackpot amount, say \$1,000.00, for the
2 player who achieves the coverall.

3 With the advent of electronic bingo, players are able to play
4 virtually an unlimited number of bingo cards, thus increasing their
5 chances of hitting a bingo. With all the positive aspects of
6 electronic bingo, it is still limited in the size and amount of the
7 payouts that can be made since there is a cap on the total of bingo
8 ball numbers (seventy-five) available to be chosen and a limited
9 number of locations to hit these numbers (24 spaces). These
10 limitations along with the free space greatly affect the amount of
11 the jackpot prize that can currently be awarded.

12 There is a need to increase the player appeal of bingo in
13 order to generate increased revenues from the operation of the
14 game. Increased player participation would allow the payment of
15 higher payouts which in turn would generate more player participa-
16 tion.

17 It is an object of the present invention to provide a method
18 of playing bingo and an improved bingo card that will increase the
19 player participation in the game.

20 It is a further object of the present invention to increase
21 the popularity of bingo by increasing the difficulty factor of
22 getting a bingo, to allow for prizes high enough to attract
23 gamblers away from other types of gaming such as video poker, slot
24 machines and live table games, and to compete with lotteries.

25 The present invention adds a degree of difficulty to bingo
26 that increases the odds for obtaining a bingo thus allowing the

1 gaming establishment or bingo operator to offer higher prizes.
2 This is done by adding two columns and two rows to a standard five-
3 by-five matrix card to create a seven-by-seven matrix card. These
4 two additional columns can be labeled with any suitable differenti-
5 ating symbols such as "E" and "S". This would create a game called
6 BINGOES. The additional columns and rows could be demarcated
7 separately, such as by using different colors to make the game
8 easier to play and understand.

9 It is a feature of the present invention to utilize a bingo
10 card that uses a matrix of seven rows and seven columns which will
11 increase the difficulty of obtaining a winning combination and will
12 also increase the types of winning combinations that can be
13 utilized.

14 It is a further feature of the present invention to use
15 different colored bingo balls so that the winning combinations can
16 be based not only the numbers selected but also the colors of those
17 numbers. The bingo card can also have different colored areas
18 corresponding to the colors on the bingo balls.

19 It is a further feature of the present invention to provide a
20 progressive jackpot feature to the game of bingo in which the
21 player can become eligible for the progressive jackpot by making a
22 separate wager.

23 It is an advantage of the present invention that the addition-
24 al features added to the bingo game will allow more payouts to be
25 made by the gaming establishment or the bingo operator. This will
26 result in increased player participation and additional revenues to

1 the gaming establishment or bingo operator.

2 Other objects, features and advantages of the present
3 invention will become apparent from a consideration of the
4 following detailed description.

5
6 Summary of the Invention

7 A bingo card is provided having a matrix of seven columns and
8 seven rows. A free space may be provided at the center of the
9 matrix (at the intersection of the fourth column and the fourth
10 row). Play is conducted according to the conventional manner of
11 play of bingo, but using the seven-by-seven matrix. Because the
12 size of the matrix has been increased, additional winning combina-
13 tions are available and players can be paid for being the first
14 player to achieve a four spot bingo, a five spot bingo, a six spot
15 bingo, a seven spot bingo and so forth. This permits multiple
16 winners during each round of the game of bingo and the amount of
17 the payouts can be based on the relative difficulty of obtaining
18 each type of winning combination.

19 An alternative bingo card and method of play includes the
20 designation of the sixth and seventh row and the sixth and seventh
21 column of the seven-by-seven bingo card as distinctly demarcated
22 sections of the bingo card, for example by using a different color
23 or colors for these rows and columns. Players achieving a winning
24 combination in certain specified sections of the bingo card could
25 be paid varying amount as the payout.

1 A progressive feature can be added to the method of play of
2 bingo in which the player makes a separate, additional wager to be
3 eligible for the progressive jackpot payout.

4 5 Brief Description of the Drawings

6 Figure 1 shows a bingo card of the present invention.

7 Figure 2 shows a chart of bingo balls used in the method of
8 the present invention.

9 Figure 3 shows a schematic layout for an electronic bingo game
10 using the bingo card and method of play of the present invention.
11

12 Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiments

13 A bingo card of the present invention is shown generally at 10
14 in Figure 1. The bingo card 10 consists of a plurality of spaces
15 that will includes numbers formed in a seven-by-seven matrix. The
16 seven vertical columns 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 27 each prefera-
17 bly include a symbol designating the column, e.g. the symbols B I
18 N G O E S as shown in Figure 1. The seven horizontal rows 31, 32,
19 33, 34, 35, 36 and 37 do not necessarily require symbols to
20 identify the rows, although could be provided if desired.

21 As shown in Figure 1, location 41 designates the intersection
22 of the third column 23 and the third row 33. Location 51 desig-
23 nates the intersection of the fourth column 24 and the fourth row
24 34. In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the
25 sixth column 26, seventh column 27, sixth row 36 and seventh row 37
26 are demarcated differently from the other rows and columns. For

1 example, the sixth column 26, seventh column 27, sixth row 36 and
2 seventh row 37 could be printed with a red background while the
3 remaining rows and columns could simply have a white background.
4 Any distinguishing colors could be used or other forms of separate
5 demarcation could also be used, such as shading, cross-hatching or
6 similar ways of showing separate demarcation.

7 The two additional columns and the two additional rows would
8 increase the amount of numbers in the number pool of bingo balls
9 from 75 to 147 which could be disbursed to the respective bingo
10 card columns as shown by the following table:

T
9
0
X

B	I	N	G	O	E	S
1	22	43	64	85	105	127
T	T	T	T	T	T	T
H	H	H	H	H	H	H
R	R	R	R	R	R	R
U	U	U	U	U	U	U
21	42	63	84	105	126	147

11

12

TABLE 1.

1 The bingo card 10 shown in Figure 1 could be used in the play
2 of a variety of variations of conventional bingo. The entire
3 seven-by-seven matrix card could be used to play the game of bingo
4 and a player would be paid for covering spots corresponding to
5 called bingo balls according to one or more of the following
6 winning combinations: a straight line of seven numbers in a row
7 either vertically, horizontally or diagonally; the four corners;
8 the inside rectangle comprising the eight spots around the center
9 free space 51, the outside rectangle comprising the twenty-four
10 spots around the perimeter of the bingo card 10 or the intermediate
11 rectangle comprising the sixteen spots between the inside rectangle
12 and the outside rectangle. The operator can designate payout
13 amounts based on the degree of difficulty of obtaining one or more
14 of these various winning combinations.

15 Alternatively, two contemporaneous bingo games could be run
16 simultaneously using the same bingo card. A conventional five-by-
17 five matrix game could be called using that portion of the bingo
18 card 10 comprising columns 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 and rows 31, 32,
19 33, 34 and 35. For this game, the free space would be designated
20 at space 41. The same bingo card 10 could be used for the seven-
21 by-seven matrix game described above in which all seven columns and
22 rows are active and the free space is designated at space 51. Play
23 continues until one player achieves a winning combination in the
24 five-by-five matrix game and one player achieves a winning
25 combination in the seven-by-seven matrix game. To make it even
26 more difficult to win, it could be required that the winning player

1 have both the five-by-five matrix game winner and the seven-by-
2 seven matrix game winner on the same bingo card. The operator can
3 designate payout amounts based on the degree of difficulty of
4 obtaining either a five-by-five matrix game winning combination, a
5 seven-by-seven matrix game winning combination or both.

6 Another alternative method of play using the bingo card 10 shown in
7 Figure 1 is to provide different payouts to the player depending on
8 what locations of the bingo card 10 are used to form the winning
9 combinations. In the preferred embodiment described above in
10 column 26, column 27, row 36 and row 37 are shaded in the color red
11 and the remaining rows and columns are shaded in the color white,
12 a player could be paid a higher payout if he achieved an "all red"
13 bingo instead of a mixed red and white bingo.

14 It is also contemplated to use separate and distinct markings
15 on the bingo balls, themselves, to differentiate some of the bingo
16 balls from other of the bingo balls. For example, some of the
17 bingo balls could be colored red and the remainder of the bingo
18 balls colored white, in addition to the individual letters and
19 numbers each bingo ball has marked thereon.

20 Figure 2 shows a chart 100 of all seventy-five of the bingo
21 balls that would be used in a five-by-five matrix game. In this
22 preferred embodiment of the present invention, some of the bingo
23 balls as shown at 63 are colored white (for example, balls numbered
24 8-15, 23-30, 38-45, 53-60 and 68-75), some of the bingo balls as
25 shown at 62 are colored red (for example, balls numbered 2-7, 17-
26 22, 32-37, 47-52 and 62-67) and some of the bingo balls as shown at

1 61 are colored red with a black stripe (balls numbered 1, 16, 31,
2 46 and 61).

3 Various payouts can be made to the player depending on whether
4 the player achieves an all white bingo, an all red bingo, an all
5 red with black stripes bingo or a mixed bingo.

6 The same principle can be applied to the seven-by-seven matrix
7 game.

8 The method of the present invention can include a progressive
9 jackpot feature. A player makes a wager and receives a bingo card
10 of the type shown in Figure 1. The player is then eligible to
11 participate in a five-by-five matrix game and the player uses only
12 the five-by-five portion of the bingo card for this game. The
13 player makes a second, separate wager that goes into a separate
14 pool and the player is eligible for the seven-by-seven matrix game.
15 As money is wagered by players participating in the seven-by-seven
16 matrix game, the size of the payout that a player can win in the
17 seven-by-seven game can increase progressively.

18 If desired by the gaming establishment or the bingo operator,
19 both the five-by-five matrix game and the seven-by-seven matrix
20 game can be run as progressive jackpot payouts. The player may be
21 eligible for the progressive payouts by making a third separate
22 wager. Portions of the third wager are designated to separate
23 pools. Separate pools can include jackpot pools, future pools and
24 lower payout pools.

25 Figure 3 shows a schematic layout of an electronic bingo game
26 that uses the bingo card and the method of play of the present

1 invention. An electronic gaming machine 200 is provided with a
2 video screen 210. The video screen 210 has a location 220 in which
3 the bingo card is displayed to the player. The video screen also
4 can include displays that provide other information to the player,
5 such as a display 240 that shows the number of credits accrued to
6 the player, a touch panel 250 to allow the player to make a
7 progressive bet, a touch panel 260 to allow the player to bet one
8 or more of his accrued credits, a display 270 that shows the
9 monetary value per credit, a touch panel 280 to allow the player to
10 play the seven-by-seven matrix bingo card and a touch panel 290 to
11 allow the player to play the five-by-five matrix bingo card. A
12 bill acceptor or coin acceptor 230 is also provided to allow the
13 ~~player to activate the gaming machine 200.~~

~~In. C22~~
14 While the invention has been illustrated with respect to
15 several specific embodiments thereof, these embodiments should be
16 considered as illustrative rather than limiting. Various modifica-
17 tions and additions may be made and will be apparent to those
18 skilled in the art. Accordingly, the invention should not be
19 limited by the foregoing description, but rather should be defined
20 only by the following claims.